

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A pan for installing solar modules, said pan comprising:

5 a length of material having a trough-shaped cross-section which forms a trough, said trough having a bottom, two sides extending upward from said bottom, and a relatively horizontal flange at the top of each of said sides.

2. The pan of claim 1 further comprising:

spaced holes through said bottom, said horizontal flange, or through said bottom and said horizontal flange.

3. The pan of claim 2 wherein said material is non-corrodable.

4. The pan of claim 2 further comprising:

5 at least one shipping insert spaced along said pan and releasably fitted into said trough, each of said shipping inserts having at least one slot adapted to receive the edge of a solar module.

5. The pan of claim 2 further comprising:

10 a plurality of shipping inserts spaced along said pan and releasably fitted into said trough, each of said shipping inserts having a plurality of parallel slots, each of said parallel slots adapted to receive the edge of a different solar module.

6. The pan of claim 5 wherein said shipping inserts are friction-fitted into said trough.

7. The pan of claim 1 wherein said length is about 60 to about 120 inches long.

8. An solar array mounted on a roof, support structure or the like, said array comprising:

a plurality of pans positioned in spaced, parallel rows on said roof or support structure, each pan comprising a length of material having a trough-shaped cross-section which forms a trough, said trough having a bottom, two sides extending upward from said bottom, and a relatively horizontal flange at the top of each of said sides;

means for connecting said pans to said roof or support structure;

a plurality of solar modules; and

means for securing said solar modules to said flanges of said pans.

9. The solar array of claim 8 wherein said means for securing said solar modules to said flanges is comprised of an adhesive.

10. The solar array of claim 8 wherein said means for securing said solar modules to said flanges comprise clips affixed to said flanges.

11. The array of claim 8 wherein said bottom of each pan have preformed holes therethrough and wherein said means for connecting said pans to said roof or support structure comprises

a fastener passing through each of said preformed holes in said bottom of each of said pans and through corresponding holes in said roof or support structure.

12. The array of claim 11 wherein said fastener comprises a threaded element having an expandable anchor on the lower end thereon; and

a nut threaded onto the top of said threaded element.

13. The array of claim 11 wherein each of said plurality of rows of pans comprises

a plurality of pans wherein a bottom end of one of said pan is telescoped within a top end of an adjacent pan.

5           14. A method of packaging solar modules for shipping, said method comprising:

          releasably positioning a plurality of first spaced, shipping inserts into the trough of a first pan, said first pan comprising a length of a material having a trough-shaped cross-section which forms said trough; each of said first shipping  
10 inserts having a plurality of parallel slots therein which align with said slots in the other of said inserts to thereby effectively provide a plurality of parallel slots across said first pan when said inserts are within said trough of said first  
15 pan;

          placing one edge of a solar module into each of said parallel slots in said first inserts;

          releasably positioning a plurality of second shipping inserts into the trough of a second pan having the same  
20 construction as said first pan; each of said second inserts having a plurality of parallel slots therein which align with said slots in the other said second inserts to thereby effectively provide a second plurality of parallel, longitudinal slots across said second pan when said inserts are within said  
25 trough of said second pan; and

          placing the opposite edge of each of said solar modules into a respective parallel slot in said second inserts to thereby protect said edges of said module during shipping.

15. The method of claim 14 further comprising  
          positioning a protector over each end of said pans and said solar modules after said modules are placed within said  
5 slots of said inserts of said first and second pans to thereby protect said ends of said modules during shipping.

16. The method of claim 15 further comprising  
          securing said pans and said protectors around said modules to thereby form a complete package for shipping.

17. A method of installing an array of solar modules onto a roof or the like, said method comprising:

- 5 positioning a plurality of pans on said roof, each of said pans comprised of a length of material having a trough-shaped cross-section which forms a trough, said trough having a bottom which is attached to said roof, two sloping sides extending upward from said bottom, and a relatively horizontal flange at the top of each of said sides;
- 10 securing said pans to said roof;
- securing said solar modules to said flanges of adjacent pans.

18. The method of claim 17 wherein said solar modules are secured to said flanges by adhesive.

19. The method of claim 17 wherein said solar modules are secured to said flanges by clips.

20. The method of claim 17 wherein the step of attaching said pans to said roof comprises:

- 5 positioning each pan in its desired position on the roof;
- drilling holes through the roof;
- 5 passing a fastener through the drilled holes and anchoring said fastener to said roof; and
- securing said pan to said fastener.

21. The method of claim 20 wherein said holes in said bottom of said pan are preformed.

22. The method of claim 20 wherein said fastener is a threaded element with an expandable anchor at one end thereof.

23. The pan of Claim 1 wherein said trough-shaped cross-section is a V-shaped cross-section and wherein said sides are sloping sides extending upward from said bottom.

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24. The solar array of Claim 8 wherein said trough-shaped cross-section is a V-shaped cross-section and wherein  
10 said sides are sloping sides extending upward from said bottom.

25. The method of Claim 14 wherein said trough-shaped cross-section is a V-shaped cross-section.

15 26. The method of Claim 17 wherein said trough-shaped cross-section is a V-shaped cross-section and wherein said sides are sloping sides extending upward from said bottom.